



Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
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Emma G. Whiteknact School

EAST PROVIDENCE

THE SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

February 18, 2005



School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT)

The school accountability program of the Rhode Island Department of Education

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Purpose and Limits of This Report

This is the report of the SALT team that visited Emma G. Whiteknact School from February 14-18, 2005.

The SALT visit report makes every effort to provide your school with a valid, specific picture of how well your students are learning. The report also portrays how the teaching in your school affects learning, and how the school supports learning and teaching. The purpose of developing this information is to help you make changes in teaching and in the school that will improve the learning of your students. The report is valid because the team's inquiry is governed by a protocol that is carefully designed to make it possible for visit team members to make careful judgments using accurate evidence. The careful exercise of professional judgment makes the findings useful for school improvement because these judgments identify where the visit team thinks the school is doing well, and where it is doing less well.

The major questions the team addressed were:

- ◆ *How well do students learn at Emma G. Whiteknact School?*
- ◆ *How well does the teaching at Emma G. Whiteknact School affect learning?*
- ◆ *How well does Emma G. Whiteknact School support learning and teaching?*

The following features of this visit are at the heart of the report:

Members of the visit team are primarily teachers and administrators from Rhode Island public schools. The majority of team members are teachers. The names and affiliations of the team members are listed at the end of the report.

The team sought to capture what makes this school work, or not work, as a public institution of learning. Each school is unique and the team has tried to capture what makes Emma G. Whiteknact School distinct.

The team did not compare this school to any other school.

When writing the report, the team deliberately chose words that it thought would best convey its message to the school, based on careful consideration of what it had learned about the school.

The team reached consensus on each conclusion, each recommendation, and each commendation in this report.

The team made its judgment explicit.

This report reflects only the week in the life of the school that was observed and considered by this team. The report is not based on what the school plans to do in the future or on what it has done in the past.

This school visit is supported by the Rhode Island Department of Education as a component of School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT). To gain the full advantages of a peer visiting system, RIDE deliberately did not participate in the active editing of this SALT visit report. That was carried out by the team's Chair with the support of Catalpa. Ltd.

The team closely followed a rigorous protocol of inquiry that is rooted in Practice-based Inquiry™ (Catalpa Ltd). The detailed *Handbook for Chairs of the SALT School Visit, 2nd Edition* describes the theoretical constructs behind the SALT visit and stipulates the many details of the visit procedures. The *Handbook* and other relevant documents are available at www.Catalpa.org. Contact Rick Richards at (401) 222-4600 x 2194 or ride0782@ride.ri.net for further information about the SALT visit protocol.

SALT visits undergo rigorous quality control. Catalpa Ltd. monitors each visit and determines whether the report can be endorsed. Endorsement assures the reader that the team and the school followed the visit protocol. It also assures that the conclusions and the report meet specified standards.

Sources of Evidence

The Sources of Evidence that this team used to support its conclusions are listed in the appendix.

The team spent a total of over 76 hours in direct classroom observation. Most of this time was spent in observing complete lessons or classes. Almost every classroom was visited at least once, and almost every teacher was observed more than once. Team members had conversations with various teachers and staff for a total of 21 hours.

The full visit team built the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations presented here through intense and thorough discussion. The team met for a total of 30.5 hours in team meetings spanning the five days of the visit. This time does not include the time the team spent in classrooms, with teachers, and in meetings with students, parents, and school and district administrators.

The team did agree by consensus that every conclusion in this report is:

- ◆ *Important enough to include in the report*
- ◆ *Supported by the evidence the team gathered during the visit*
- ◆ *Set in the present, and*
- ◆ *Contains the judgment of the team*

Using the Report

This report is designed to have value to all audiences concerned with how Emma G. Whiteknact School can improve student learning. However, the most important audience is the school itself.

How your school improvement team reads and considers the report is the critical first step. RIDE will provide a SALT Fellow to lead a follow-up session with the school improvement team to help start the process. With support from the East Providence School District School Improvement Coordinator and from SALT fellows, the school improvement team should carefully decide what changes it wants to make in learning, teaching, and the school, and amend its School Improvement Plan to reflect these decisions.

The East Providence School District, RIDE and the public should consider what the report says or implies about how they can best support Emma G. Whiteknact School as it works to strengthen its performance.

Any reader of this report should consider the report as a whole. A reader who only looks at recommendations misses important information.

2. PROFILE OF EMMA G. WHITEKNACT SCHOOL

Emma G. Whiteknact School, located in East Providence, Rhode Island, serves students from kindergarten through fifth grade. The original building opened in 1959. An addition was constructed in 1989.

Of the 276 students in attendance, 189 (68%) are white, 55 (20%) are black, 24 (9%) are Hispanic, 6 (2%) are Asian, and two (1%) are Native American. Twenty-seven students have Individualized Education Plans, one has a Section 504 Plan, and four learn in a self-contained special education classroom. Additionally, 28 students receive Title I Reading Services, and 20 students receive English as a Second Language instruction.

A professional staff of one administrator, 23 full and part-time faculty, eight aides, and three foster grandparents services the school. Further, a guidance counselor serves students one day each week. A Multi-Disciplinary Team consisting of a school psychologist, a social worker, a Developmental Physical Therapist, a speech and language pathologist, an occupational therapist, and others also services students. Additionally, two custodians, a before and after school YMCA Outreach Daycare program, and an after school band instructor currently service Whiteknact School. Bright Horizons Reading Program instructors serve the students at Whiteknact twice per week.

Emma G. Whiteknact School offers students a variety of local, state, and federal resources and partnerships. Local volunteers, such as Foster Grandparents and new mentors, provide supports to the school community. Whiteknact receives science materials and professional development opportunities from the East Bay Educational Collaborative. East Providence High School students tutor Whiteknact children on a weekly basis through their school advisory program.

This year Whiteknact received a School to Career Grant for performing arts opportunities with the Providence Performing Arts Center. Students are making several field trips to PPAC to enjoy fine arts performances. Additionally, one fifth grade class is piloting a new Health program. All teachers are trained in Kits in Teaching Elementary Sciences (KITES). Further, the school's staff serves on a number of committees, including Display Cases, Einstein Chair, Home Tutoring, School Store, and After School Bright Horizons.

3. PORTRAIT OF EMMA G. WHITEKNACT SCHOOL AT THE TIME OF THE VISIT

Emma G. Whiteknact School is a small brick elementary school that is nestled on a quiet residential street. Upon entering the building, the clean hallways, attractive bulletin boards, and colorful Broadway posters welcome visitors and members of the school community. Students, staff, and students describe Whiteknact as a caring place for students to learn.

The diverse student body represents numerous cultural and linguistic groups. The students are well behaved and friendly. These students enjoy coming to school and sharing their learning experiences with others. They spend most of each school day completing straightforward tasks assigned by their teachers. High expectations for all students have not yet permeated the entire teaching staff. Most instruction is teacher directed, making it difficult for students to take ownership of their learning. Instructional time is not used to its fullest advantage. Scheduling of pull-out programs and itinerants is a major concern.

The well-received new principal brings vibrancy to the school. The school staff feels she listens to them and supports their needs. An experienced leader, she is eager to make Whiteknact a school community whose members work together to improve student learning.

Whiteknact is a school in transition. Over half of the teaching staff is new either to the school or to their teaching positions. Teachers are very concerned about the psychological, social, and emotional needs of their students. The limited available staff is stretched to help with these needs. While there are computers in the classrooms, up-to-date technology is insufficient. The School Improvement Plan is not an effective force for change.

Despite the school's moderately performing and improving designation, continued improvement in student learning will require higher expectations for all students, more effective use of instructional time, and student involvement in, and ownership of, their learning.

4. FINDINGS ON STUDENT LEARNING

Conclusions

When they can choose interesting books, students at Whiteknact School say they enjoy reading because it helps them learn new things. Most students read at a basic level; they know how to read the words on the page. When reading, students use picture clues, context clues, and mental images to help them understand what they read. Some students, however, struggle to read the words on the page. They know how to sound out words or ask for help if they are stuck. Students in some classrooms are learning the skills of good readers. They know how to make inferences, use background knowledge to help them relate what they read to their own lives, and make predictions about what will happen in their reading. Too few students, however, know how to choose books independently that are appropriate for their reading levels. Instead, they typically read assigned texts that they use to answer questions that require mostly literal, factual answers. Students find time to read after they have finished with their classroom activities, but this time is often fragmented and brief. They do not spend enough time during the school day reading. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students, talking with students, teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, classroom textbooks, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

While seventy-two percent of the fourth grade students achieved the standard or achieved the standard with honors on the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination Writing Effectiveness subtest, only a few students at each grade level write effectively in their classrooms. High quality student writing at Whiteknact is organized and stays on topic, shows the personality of the student, and includes descriptive details that paint a picture in the reader's mind. Too frequently, student writing shows little progress from grades two to five. Teachers report that their students' writing ability is low: their pieces are too short; they do not use appropriate conventions or grammar, and their writing lacks organization. The lower quality writing often repeats the same details without purpose, does not fully explain the writer's opinion, and does not include a hook that makes the reader want to continue reading. Too often, students do not understand the qualities of good writing. Instead, they focus on writing a basic response to a teacher prompt, beginning their sentences with capital letters, and spelling words correctly. While students know how to create final drafts, most of them rely on an adult to make the necessary corrections on their "sloppy copy." Most students do not know how to improve their writing by editing or revising it independently. Students do not spend enough time writing. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the students and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Students at Whiteknact School are learning the necessary skills to solve problems. They know how to use multiple ways to solve problems when they defend their bowling pins while playing the game Battleship in physical education. Students use logical reasoning to test hypotheses when performing science experiments such as “Mock Rock,” and they say they love science because they are allowed to do experiments. Further, they recognize patterns in music when they keep rhythm and time. Yet students often do not realize that they are using problem solving strategies when they participate in these activities. Hence, they have difficulty applying these learned strategies when they face new problems, such as those in math. Too many do not understand the purpose of, or the underlying concepts behind, the tasks they complete. Instead, when faced with a math problem, most students focus on completing the task and arriving at the correct answer. It is not surprising that only forty-four percent of students achieved the standard or achieved the standard with honors on the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination problem solving subtest. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students and parents, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, reviewing school improvement plan, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries)*

Students at Whiteknact say they enjoy coming to school and feel safe here. They understand their teachers’ behavioral expectations and are well behaved and polite. They respect their teachers, the staff, and one another. These students compliantly follow the established classroom routines and the directions of their teachers. Yet many remain passive learners, who do not take risks in their learning or challenge themselves. They rely on the teacher to tell them whether their work is good, and far too often they focus only on putting down the correct answers. While contributing to classrooms that function smoothly, these behaviors and attitudes do not encourage students to become self-directed thinkers and lifelong learners. Students say they want more choices in school, particularly in their writing topics, book selections, and the groups with which they work. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with students, parents, and school administrators, talking with students and teachers, 2004 SALT Survey report, 2003 Information Works!)*

Important Thematic Findings in Student Learning

Students:

- ◆ *Seldom exercise choice in their learning*
- ◆ *Spend insufficient time reading and writing in school*
- ◆ *Rarely use higher order thinking skills*
- ◆ *Are satisfied with simple solutions, and rarely extend their own learning*
- ◆ *Work well together and respect others*
- ◆ *Enjoy learning and coming to school*

5. FINDINGS ON TEACHING FOR LEARNING

Conclusions

The reading instruction at Whiteknact School follows a specific and prescribed program. Most teachers emphasize basic reading skills, teaching students to recognize words, use context clues to decipher their meaning, and answer factual recall questions. Teachers do read aloud to students, but usually these read alouds emphasize simply reading the story and requiring students to understand what was read. Oral reading in classrooms is often round robin in nature. In an attempt to differentiate instruction, teachers assign children appropriately leveled supplemental “readers” that accompany their Trophies reading program. These readers, however, are neither exciting for the student nor quality literary pieces. In far too many classrooms, reading groups emphasize a “caste system” in which students of lower and higher groups are separated during reading time. Teachers even refer to students by their reading group colors, as prescribed by the Trophies program, thus emphasizing their reading ability labels. The children report that they know they are bad or good readers because they are in a certain color group. Yet some teachers help students learn the analysis and interpretation skills of good readers. In these classrooms, they help students link the books they read to their own experiences. They ask students to predict what is going to happen farther along in the text and require them to support their predictions by using evidence from the story. They help students infer from their texts by asking them to analyze what the characters in a book say and do. Many teachers are trying to implement guided reading practices in their classrooms, but they need more professional development to effectively implement the model. As a result of these practices, students are not challenged to go beyond acquiring basic comprehension skills. Many are learning neither analysis and interpretation skills nor simply to enjoy reading. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, students, district administrators, and parents, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, reviewing school improvement plan, classroom textbooks, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing records of professional development activities)*

Writing instruction is not consistent from classroom to classroom. Some teachers at Whiteknact effectively teach their students to write well. These teachers emphasize choosing interesting, descriptive words. They also help students feel like authors by providing designated, valued time for them to share their writing and receive constructive feedback from their peers and teachers. Further, these teachers help students learn to organize their writing by using graphic organizers and sequence words. Most teachers, however, require students to write predominately in response to proposed prompts, which stifle student creativity and interest in writing. These teachers emphasize appropriate conventions and number of sentences per paragraph or number of words per sentence, as opposed to emphasizing quality writing. These teachers provide minimal feedback to their students, generally highlighting spelling errors and providing editing corrections. Far too few teachers regularly model quality writing for their students or emphasize the characteristics of good writing in the stories students read. Some teachers are surprised by the success of students on the 2004 New Standards Reference Examination writing effectiveness subtest. These teachers attribute this success to their extensive preparation of students for the test and the practice students have had in writing their responses to prompts. District administrators aptly recognize the school's need to focus on writing and on tying reading to writing. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with students, school administrators, and district administrators, talking with students, teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing classroom assessments, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

Instruction in problem solving occurs throughout the school day, including physical education classes and science. Although students learn problem solving strategies through these activities, these strategies are not explicitly taught. Hence, students struggle to connect their learning and to apply these learned strategies to solving mathematical problems. While the district quarterly problem solving tasks include rigorous problems, daily teacher expectations for student problem solving are low. Math instruction is skills based, and almost all teachers stress the importance of students finding the right answers to problems, as opposed to their understanding how to solve problems. Too many teachers provide little time for students to discover and explore mathematical concepts. Instead, they do the thinking for their students, walking them through the problem and then giving them the correct answer. Furthermore, most teachers rarely ask students to explain the strategies or the processes they used to find a solution to a given problem. Students in some classes report that using manipulatives or calculators is "cheating," and others say they must be told by the teacher or ask permission to use these important tools. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team and students, reviewing school improvement plan, talking with students and teachers, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, discussing student work with teachers, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

Teachers in far too many classes lose significant instructional time on a daily basis. Instruction begins late and ends early. Managerial and housekeeping tasks such as lunch count, money collection, attendance, and collection of homework take too much time. When some students are pulled out of class for support services or clubs, many teachers give busywork to those students who remain in their classes and delay introducing new material. When they leave for preparation, too many teachers leave assignments to absorb time, such as handwriting worksheets and coloring activities. Bathroom breaks in too many classes take approximately twenty minutes per day—one hundred minutes per week. Snack time, transitions, and “break” further waste instructional minutes. Packing for dismissal and classroom chores begin too early. Student learning is severely compromised by these lost minutes. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, talking with teachers, reviewing teacher schedules)*

Teachers say the best part of their school is the support of their colleagues. They care about their students. Teachers advocate for needed support services and guidance to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of their children. Many teachers say their students are too needy to learn well. Only a few teachers have high expectations for all of the students in their classrooms. Too many teachers do not challenge their students to fully reach their potential. They do not make students responsible for their own learning or encourage them to take risks. Their classrooms are teacher centered and teacher driven. Consequently, students often struggle to understand the underlying purpose of their classroom activities and find it difficult to apply their learning to new situations or to make decisions about their own learning. *(following students, observing classes, talking with teachers, discussing student work with teachers)*

Commendations for Emma G. Whiteknact School

Explicit instruction in basic reading skills

Problem solving across disciplines

Supportive and caring teachers

Recommendations for Emma G. Whiteknact School

Utilize flexible and heterogeneous groupings for reading instruction.

Promote student centered discussion of literature. Extend reading to include quality and high interest books.

Move students beyond the basic comprehension of text. Challenge all students to develop analytical and interpretive reading skills.

Emphasize the characteristics of quality writing in writing instruction. Provide clear, detailed feedback on the quality of student work.

Integrate reading with writing instruction. Connect reading to writing by emphasizing quality elements of writing in reading selections

Model quality writing for students regularly. Allow students to choose their writing topics.

Explicitly instruct problem solving strategies, particularly in mathematics. Encourage use of multiple strategies and math tools in student problem solving.

Allocate time for students to explore, discover, and discuss problem solving.

Maximize use of available instructional time.

Raise expectations for all students. Make students responsible for their own learning.

Pursue additional and ongoing common, quality professional development in literacy, mathematics, and student centered instruction.

Recommendations for East Providence School Department

Provide additional and ongoing common, quality professional development in literacy, mathematics, and student centered instruction.

Provide quality and high interest literature at a variety of reading levels for the school and classroom libraries.

6. FINDINGS ON SCHOOL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

Conclusions

The principal works hard to create a welcoming environment for parents, students, and staff. She recognizes this year, her first in the school, as a “building year.” This administrator has overseen the clean up of the building and makes significant effort to involve parents in the school community. She is available and visible throughout the school, walking through the building twice a day and supervising the cafeteria during lunch. The principal is proud of her school, particularly of the children and the work of the staff. She has brought the arts to Whiteknact through display of colorful Broadway posters and field trips to professional performances. Although her energy remains focused on creating happy students who are involved in the arts, she spends less energy on teaching and learning. Because she is new as an elementary school principal, she reports that she is currently learning the curriculum and instructional needs of students at the elementary level. Parents report they are pleased with the tremendous improvement in home-school communication, particularly her phone calls informing them of early closures and available school activities, such as PTA meetings. The staff reports that she advocates for her teachers and the students, encourages their professional development, and allows them autonomy over their classrooms. Yet some teachers say she does not adequately address their concerns about discipline. District administrators state that the principal “brings an enthusiasm that is refreshing” to Whiteknact School. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, students, school and district administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, reviewing records of professional development activities)*

Whiteknact works to involve parents in the school. Communication through bilingual phone chains, newsletters, and a set date for parent teacher conferences for all students improves parent awareness of their children’s learning. An accessible table of informative brochures and handouts stands at the main entrance to the school. Numerous parents attend first day of school events and monthly PTA activities. Parents of fourth and fifth grade students are invited, and given tickets, to attend the performance of Peter Pan at the Providence Performing Arts Center with their children. These practices strengthen the home-school connection, and parents say they feel welcomed here. *(observing the school outside of the classroom, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, and parents, talking with students, teachers, and school administrators, 2004 SALT Survey report, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Support services are inadequate to meet the needs of students and teachers at Whiteknact. Special education employs a combination of self-contained, pullout, and inclusion models. ESL and reading classes combine pullout and in-class support. While these services are tailored to meet the needs of individual students, the approach works only for some. Too many students lose valuable instructional time with their peers, because they are pulled out for services or because some teachers halt their instruction for the students who are left behind in their classrooms when the others are pulled out. Teachers report that they need additional assistance and professional development in writing and implementing effective Personal Literacy Plans (PLPs). No reading specialist is assigned for students in grades three through five. The guidance counselor works at Whiteknact only one day a week. The teachers and the principal state that this is not sufficient support to meet the social and emotional needs of these students, and the SALT team agrees. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, talking with students and teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing district and school policies and practices)*

The technology at Whiteknact School is scarce and outdated. The main office has only one telephone line, making it difficult to contact the school. Copy machines break regularly and are insufficient in number to meet the classroom demand. Antiquated computers and software crash often. Some computers are in classrooms, but there is no computer lab available for whole-class use. While printers are available, some do not print. Teachers say Internet access often malfunctions. As a result, students have limited access to technology. *(following students, observing classes, observing the school outside of the classroom, reviewing completed and ongoing student work, meeting with district administrators, talking with students and teachers, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing self study)*

Problems in teacher schedules and programmed activities interfere with student learning. Constant interruptions prevail. Whiteknact's self study identifies concern about interrupted teaching blocks: it is "hard to fit in ninety minutes uninterrupted ELA with walking club, chorus, recess." Teacher scheduled "preparation time," when teacher assistants supervise the students, contributes to this situation. Also, teachers report it is difficult to collaborate with other teachers and support staff because they lack designated common planning time. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team and school administrator, reviewing school improvement plan, reviewing self study, reviewing teacher contract)*

Emma G. Whiteknact is a school in transition. The principal is new to the school this year. About half of the teaching staff is new either to the school or to their positions. Teachers are frustrated by the institution of PLPs, with their additional testing requirements, and the loss of support staff for ESL, student enrichment, and reading. Further, teachers are implementing the new Trophies program, but they feel the need for additional professional development to use the program effectively. Such numerous changes are stressful for the Whiteknact learning community. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team, school and district administrators, and parents, talking with teachers and school administrators, reviewing school improvement plan)*

As a whole, the School Improvement Team is not representative of the Whiteknact school community. It consists of only one classroom teacher. The art, music, and library teachers, though valuable members of the team, do not work full-time at this school. The School Improvement Plan has yet to become a living document in the classrooms. The plan contains 12 action plans, far too many to implement effectively. Due to the multiple formats used, the plan is confusing. The action plans are not consistent, and they are haphazardly organized. Some action plans do not indicate who is responsible for implementing the different components, while others lack information about how the plan's effectiveness will be monitored. Teachers report that they are not familiar with the document, making its implementation in the classroom difficult. Overall, the plan is overwhelming in scope. It is more like a wish list of resources the school wants. The School Improvement Plan, as written, is not helping to improve student learning or teacher instruction. *(following students, observing classes, meeting with the school improvement team and district administrators, talking with teachers, reviewing school improvement plan)*

Commendations for Emma G. Whiteknact School

Supportive, approachable school leader

Efforts to strengthen the home-school connection

Recommendations for Emma G. Whiteknact School

Connect the students' exposure to the arts to their academic learning in their classrooms.

Focus leadership efforts on learning and teaching.

Continue efforts to strengthen the home school connection.

Move towards more inclusive support services.

Pursue school-wide professional development on effective testing, writing, and implementation of Personal Literacy Plans.

Provide and utilize designated common planning time for classroom teachers and support staff.

Streamline teacher schedules to provide uninterrupted teaching blocks of time.

Schedule recreational student activities before or after school.

Form a school improvement team that represents the Whiteknact School community.

Use this report to rewrite the School Improvement Plan. Hold teachers accountable for implementing the plan in their classrooms.

Recommendations for East Providence School Department

Provide additional support service personnel, particularly in guidance, ESL, and reading assistance, to Whiteknact School.

Provide school-wide professional development on effective testing, writing, and implementation of Personal Literacy Plans.

Update the computers at Whiteknact. Provide the necessary additional technology: phone lines, computer lab, and printers.

Support Whiteknact School as it revises the School Improvement Plan to reflect the findings of this report.

7. FINAL ADVICE TO EMMA G. WHITEKNACT SCHOOL

There are great possibilities here. This staff is supportive and filled with expertise. Be open to change and willing to take risks with new methods and approaches that encourage your students to take ownership of their learning. Work collaboratively, and celebrate your teaching and learning successes. As you move toward more student-centered classrooms, encourage students to take risks with their learning. Continue to foster a safe and pleasant learning environment.

Make daily instruction in reading, writing, and problem solving a priority. Use your available school time to focus on academics. While many are “needy,” all Whiteknact students are capable of learning. Challenge each student, and have high expectations for all of them. They will rise to the occasion!

Use the conclusions, commendations, and recommendations of this report to help you navigate your journey. We wish you well.

ENDORSEMENT OF SALT VISIT TEAM REPORT

Emma G. Whiteknact School

February 18, 2005

Catalpa Ltd. monitors all SALT visits and examines each SALT visit team report to determine whether it should be endorsed as a legitimate SALT report. The endorsement decision is based on procedures and criteria specified in *Endorsing SALT Visit Team Reports* (available on Catalpa website). Catalpa Ltd. bases its judgment about the legitimacy of a report on these three questions:

Did the SALT visit team and the host school conduct the visit in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the protocol for the visit?

Do the conclusions of the report meet the tests for conclusions specified in the visit protocol (important, accurate, set in present, shows the team's judgment)?

Does the report meet the tests for a report as specified in the visit protocol (fair, useful, and persuasive of productive action)?

Using the answers to these questions, the final decision to endorse the report answers the overall endorsement question: Is this a legitimate SALT team visit report? In order to make this determination, Catalpa weighs all the questions and issues that have been raised to decide whether a report is legitimate or not. While it is possible that a challenge related to one of the three questions listed above would be serious enough to withhold or condition the endorsement, it is more likely that issues serious enough to challenge a report's legitimacy will cut across the three questions.

While the SALT visit protocol requires that all SALT visits are conducted to an exceptionally high standard of rigor, visits are "real-life" events; it is impossible to control for all unexpected circumstances that might arise. The protocol for the conduct of the visit is spelled out in the *Handbook for SALT Visit Chairs*, 1st edition.

Since unexpected circumstances might result in either the team or the school straying too far from the protocol for a visit, Catalpa monitors both the school and the team during a visit regarding the conduct of the visit.

Most often actual visit events or issues do not challenge a report's legitimacy and Catalpa's monitoring and endorsement is routine. A district administrator, principal, faculty member or parent may not like a report, or think it is too negative, or think the visit should have been conducted in a manner that is not consistent with the protocol. None of these represent a challenge to a report's legitimacy; concerns that might challenge an endorsement are based on events that stray too far from the protocol.

The Catalpa review of this visit and this report was routine.

The steps Catalpa completed for this review were:

- discussion with the chair about any issues related to the visit before it began
- daily discussion of any issues with the visit chair during the visit
- observation of three portions of the visit
- discussion with the principal regarding any concerns about the visit at the time of the visit
- thorough review of the report in both its pre-release and final version form

The findings from the review are:

1. This team was certified to meet team membership requirements by RIDE staff.
2. This report was produced by a legitimate SALT Visit that was led by a trained SALT Visit Chair and conducted in a manner that is consistent with SALT Visit procedures.
3. The conclusions are legitimate SALT visit conclusions.
4. The report is a legitimate SALT visit report.

Accordingly, Catalpa Ltd. endorses this report.



Thomas A. Wilson, EdD
Catalpa Ltd.
March 9, 2005

REPORT APPENDIX

Sources of Evidence for This Report

In order to write this report the team examined test scores, student work, and other documents related to this school. The school improvement plan for Emma G. Whiteknact School was the touchstone document for the team. No matter how informative documents may be, however, there is no substitute for being at the school while it is in session—in the classrooms, in the lunchroom, and in the hallways. The team built its conclusions primarily from information about what the students, staff, and administrators think and do during their day. Thus, this visit allowed the team to build informed judgments about the teaching, learning, and support that actually takes place at Emma G. Whiteknact School.

The visit team collected its evidence from the following sources of evidence:

- ◆ *direct classroom observation*
- ◆ *observing the school outside of the classroom*
- ◆ *following 6 students for a full day*
- ◆ *observing the work of teachers and staff for a full day*
- ◆ *meeting at scheduled times with the following groups:*
 - teachers*
 - school improvement team*
 - school and district administrators*
 - students*
 - parents*
- ◆ *talking with students, teachers, staff, and school administrators*
- ◆ *reviewing completed and ongoing student work*
- ◆ *interviewing teachers about the work of their students*
- ◆ *analyzing state assessment results as reported in Information Works!*
- ◆ *reviewing the following documents:*
 - district and school policies and practices*
 - records of professional development activities*
 - classroom assessments*
 - school improvement plan for Emma G. Whiteknact School*
 - East Providence School Department Strategic Plan Update June 2003*
 - 2004 SALT Survey report*
 - classroom textbooks*
 - 2003 Information Works!*
 - 2004 New Standards Reference Examination School Summaries*
 - School and District Report Cards*
 - Agreement between East Providence Education Association and Eat*

Providence School Committee for the Years November 1, 2002 to October 31, 2005

Emma G. Whiteknact PTA Parent Information Booklet

Curriculum Template Binder

East Providence School Department Appraisal of Teacher Performance

"How to Organize a Community Mentoring Program" Binder

East Providence School Department Grades K – 5 Writing and Mathematics Quarterly Performance Assessments

East Providence School Department Elementary School Handbook Emma G. Whiteknact School 2004-2005 School Year

East Providence School Department 2004-2005 School Budget

East Providence School Department Accountability District Report 2004

No Child Left Behind

Whiteknact School Brag Book 2004-2005

Preparing to Host a SALT Visit Binder

Teacher schedules

State Assessment Results for Emma G. Whiteknact School

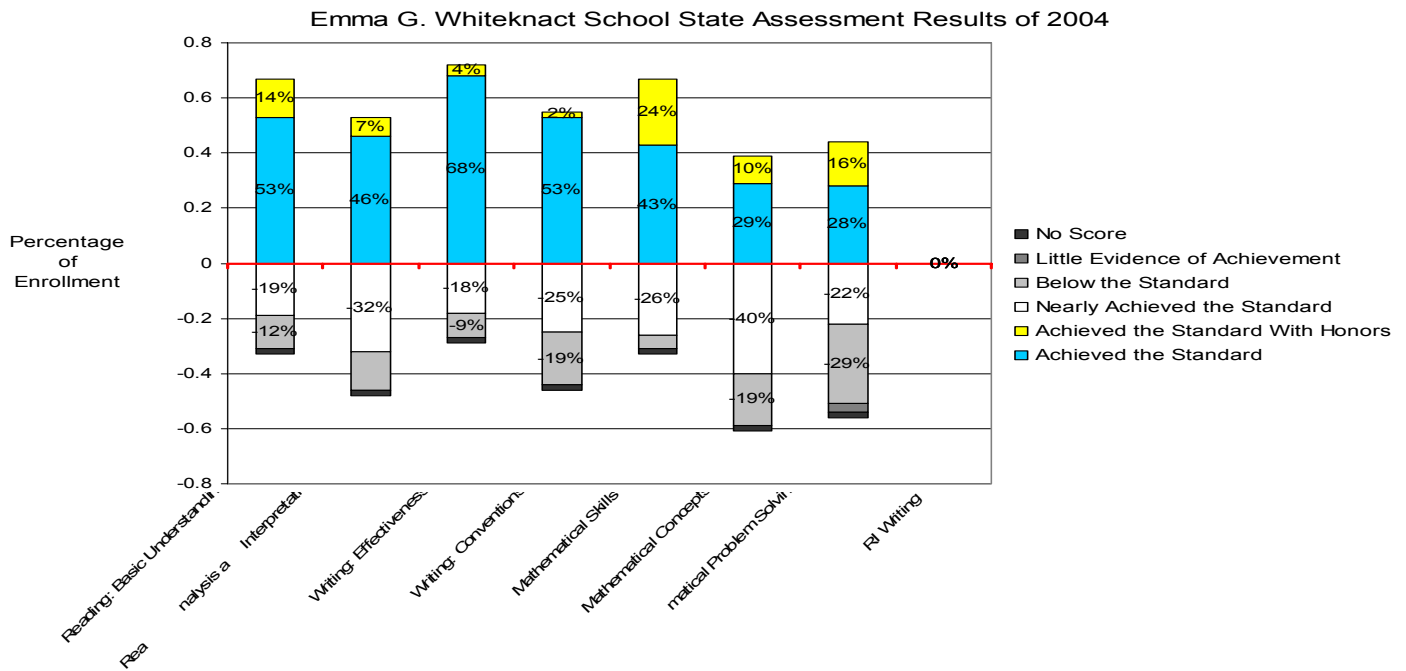
Assessment results create pieces of evidence that the visit team uses as it conducts its inquiry. The team uses this evidence to shape its efforts to locate critical issues for the school. It also uses this evidence, along with other evidence, to draw conclusions about those issues.

This school's results are from the latest available state assessment information. It is presented here in four different ways:

- ◆ *against performance standards;*
- ◆ *across student groups within the school;*
- ◆ *and over time.*

RESULTS IN RELATION TO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

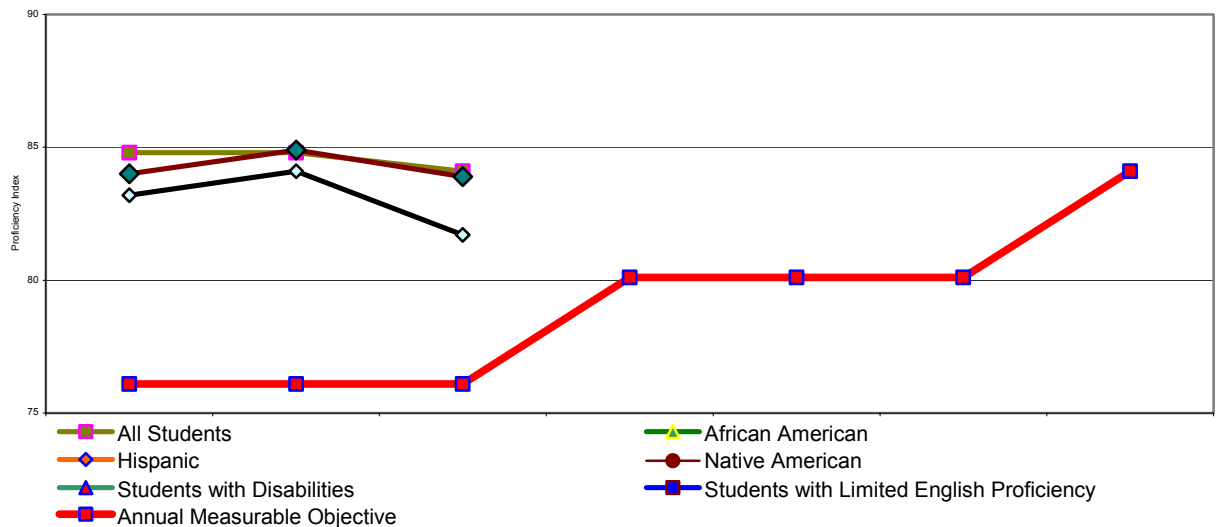
The first display shows how well the students do in relation to standards in English/Language Arts and mathematics. Student results are shown as the percentage of students taking the test whose score places them in the various categories at, above, or below the performance standard. Endorsed by the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education in 1998, the tested standards can be found in the publication *New Standards Performance Standards*.

Table 1. 2003-04 Student Results on Rhode Island State Assessments

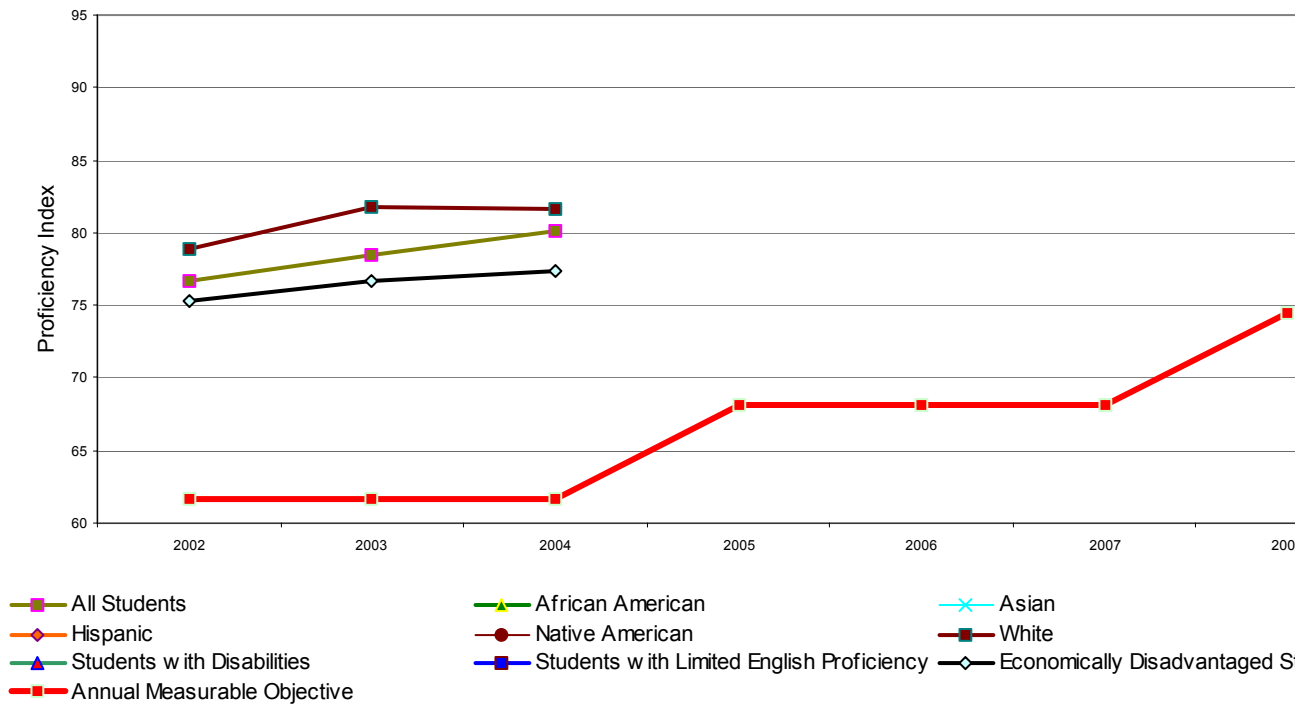
different characteristics who are in the school. This display showing targets and index scores, in accordance with the No Child Left Behind federal legislation creates information about how well the school meets the learning needs of its various students. Since breaking students into these smaller groups can result in groups becoming too small to show accurate results, this display shows the results based on three years of testing. Any student group whose index scores do not meet the targets set by RIDE require additional attention to close its performance gap.

Table 2. 2003-2004 Student Results across Subgroups

Annual Proficiency, Emma G. Whiteknact School, ELA, Gr. 4



Annual Proficiency, Emma G. Whiteknact School, Gr. 4 Math



REPORT CARD FOR EMMA G. WHITEKNACT SCHOOL

This Report Card shows the performance of Emma G. Whiteknact School compared to the school's annual measurable objectives (AMO).

These report card scores describe Emma G. Whiteknact School as a moderately performing and improving school.

Table 3. Report Card for Emma G. Whiteknact School

2004 Rhode Island School Report Card

RI SCHOOL: **EMMA G. WHITEKNACT SCHOOL**RI DISTRICT: **EAST PROVIDENCE**GRADE: **04**

| INDEX PROFICIENCY SCORE, 2002-04 | ENGLISH LANG. ARTS TARGET SCORE: 76.1 | | | | MATHEMATICS TARGET SCORE: 61.7 | | | |
|---|--|----------------|------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------|
| STUDENT GROUP | THIS SCHOOL | TARGET MET? | THIS DISTRICT | THE STATE | THIS SCHOOL | TARGET MET? | THIS DISTRICT | THE STATE |
| All Students | 84.1 | YES | 86 | 86.1 | 80.1 | YES | 79.2 | 77.5 |
| African Americans | * | YES | 80.6 | 77.8 | * | YES | 72.4 | 65.9 |
| Asian | * | YES | * | 84.5 | * | YES | * | 77.1 |
| Hispanic | * | YES | 83.3 | 75.8 | * | YES | 74.7 | 65.8 |
| Native Americans | * | YES | 87 | 83.9 | * | YES | 77.9 | 73 |
| White | 83.9 | YES | 87.4 | 88.5 | 81.6 | YES | 80.8 | 82 |
| Students with Disabilities | * | YES | 66.6 | 69.5 | * | YES | 65.1 | 66.4 |
| Students with Limited English Proficiency | * | YES | 73.1 | 68.9 | * | YES | 68.8 | 61 |
| Students who are Economically Disadvantaged | 81.7 | YES | 80.6 | 77.8 | 77.4 | YES | 74.2 | 68.4 |

| PERCENT OF STUDENTS TESTED, 2002-04 | Target: 95% | | | |
|--|--------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------|
| | THIS SCHOOL | TARGET MET? | THIS DISTRICT | THE STATE |
| English Language Arts | 99.4 | YES | 99.5 | 99.1 |
| Mathematics | 99.4 | YES | 99.6 | 99.4 |

| ATTENDANCE RATE | Target: 90% | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------|
| | THIS SCHOOL | TARGET MET? | THIS DISTRICT | THE STATE |
| | 95.4 | YES | 95.3 | 94.8 |

| TARGETS MET/MISSED, THIS SCHOOL | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| | TARGETS MET | TARGETS MISSED |
| English Language Arts Index Score | 9 | 0 |
| Mathematics Index Score | 9 | 0 |
| Percent Tested | 2 | 0 |
| Attendance Rate | 1 | 0 |

THIS SCHOOL IS CLASSIFIED AS:

Moderately Performing and Improving

Information Works! data for Emma G. Whiteknact School is available at <http://www.ridoenet.net>.

THE EMMA G. WHITEKNACT SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAM

Anita Barton,-Librarian

Stan Holtzman - Music Teacher

Gale Machado - Parent

Jean Mandeville – Foster Grandparent

Martha Rubi-Rapoza – Parent

Melissa Read – Food Service

Priscilla Sousa – Grade 2 Teacher

Santo DiGati – Art Teacher

Linda Succi – Principal

MEMBERS OF THE SALT VISIT TEAM

Catherine E. C. Hutz
English Teacher
North Smithfield Junior-Senior High School
on leave to the
Office of School Improvement and Support Services
Rhode Island Department of Education
Regents SALT Fellow
Team Chair

Pamela Alexander
Multiage Teacher, Grades One and Two
Aquidneck School
Middletown, Rhode Island

Lisa Bianco
Math Coach, Grades Kindergarten through Five
Asa Messer School
Providence, Rhode Island

Michelle Depot
Grade Four Teacher, School Improvement Team Co-Chair
Henry J Winters School
Pawtucket, Rhode Island

Robin Mathis
Principal
Carl Lauro School
Providence, Rhode Island

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Fairlawn Early Learning Center
Lincoln, Rhode Island